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## An American Tragedy

If, as now seems probable, the attempted overthrow of the Castro government in Cuba has failed, clearly the United States has permitted itself to be maneuvered into a situation which has hurt its prestige in the world.

John Hightower, who has long covered international affairs for the Associated Press, says that the White House and the State Department have so far obscured the extent of our involvement in the invasion operation. Clearly, however, this country has let the impression grow in the world that the United States was deeply involved in it.

This view is not only loudly stressed by Castro and Communist propagandists. Even in friendly Britain the *London Evening News* called the apparent failure of the revolt "a disastrous political set-back" for President Kennedy. And that set-back was not regained by the President's own strong words about the situation in his speech to the American editors on Thursday.

If this country was not involved, that should have been made crystal clear, and not apparently supported by official secrecy and expressions of

sympathy for the anti-Castro forces.

If this country was involved (which in view of its public statements to the contrary it is to be hoped it was not), it should not have been involved in feebleness, prematureness and half-heartedness. If we hit secretly, at least we should have hit hard.

The results of what Mr. Hightower calls the official obscurity about the matter is that in vast areas of the world, including many friendly countries, the United States will seem both hypocritical and inadequate.

Mr. Hightower suggests that the official chiefly responsible for this apparent fiasco was Allen Dulles, chief of the Central Intelligence Agency. If so, that inherited official, who operates in the dark even so far as his countrymen are concerned, should be quietly removed from the Kennedy administration. One of the President's first mistakes was keeping him in that job.

When it is threatened, America must defend its security with all its might. Its security is not defended when it appears to the world that neither American candor nor American power are equal to the expectations of other nations.